

**STANDARD:            RESOURCE FAMILY LICENSING FOR RELATIVES AND  
NON-RELATIVES**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Standard is to provide direction and guidance on the licensing and training requirements of non-relative and relative resource family homes. This standard will address the following:

- Definitions related to the licensing of resource families;
- Resource family licensing requirements;
- Waivers and variances to licensing requirements;
- Code X— **initial** emergency relative placement procedures;
- Expedited relative placement requirements;
- ICPC placements with relatives out-of-state;
- Placing children in homes licensed by the tribes;
- Foster care payments;
- Resource family/adoptive (dual) home study (mutual assessment process);
- Preparation and training of resource families; and
- Responsibility of the CFS social worker/clinician related to placing children in alternate care.

**INTRODUCTION**

Placement of a child in an alternate care setting should be coordinated and structured to minimize trauma to the child and their family, to assure the child will be safe and receive needed services to reduce the long-term negative effects of the child's separation from their parents and to allow for continued connection between the child, their family, and the community. Knowledgeable and skilled resource families and other alternate care providers are integral to providing quality services to children placed outside their family home. Licensing processes and requirements are designed to assess the suitability of potential resource families to safely care for children.

IDHW rules, policies, and standards require that alternate care placements for children are:

- In compliance with Idaho Child Care Licensing Standards;
- The most home-like setting possible; and
- The least restrictive and the most appropriate level of care to meet the child's needs.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Alternate Care** - temporary 24-hour care provided outside of the child's family home.

**Central Registry** – is a centralized database in FOCUS of individuals who receive a valid or substantiated disposition on a referral of child abuse or neglect. The purpose of the Central Registry is to prevent children and vulnerable adults from maltreatment by individuals who have previously abused or neglected a child(ren). Information in the child abuse registry is held confidential and is only disclosed pursuant to the written consent of the person whose name appears on the registry when he/she is seeking certain types of employment involving direct contact with children and a review of the registry is required by law. Idaho Department of Health and Welfare will conduct a Central Registry check for child welfare agencies in other states to assist them with child abuse and neglect investigations or placement and licensing requirements for potential foster and adoptive parents. The Department will also conduct a Central Registry check for private adoption and licensing agencies upon receipt of a signed release of information or consent from the prospective foster/adopt applicant.

**Code X**– may be used for the first emergency placement of a child following a declaration of imminent danger or an endorsement upon the summons. Code X is a process of obtaining an, on the spot, abbreviated criminal background check to allow for the immediate placement of a child with a relative during the emergency. Code X is not to be used for subsequent placements after a child has initially been placed in alternate care. A child placed in a relative home utilizing a Code X criminal history check is not eligible for IV-E funding until the home completes the licensing process, and is fully licensed. **The Standard IDHW criminal history background check must also be initiated within 48 hours of using the Code X check.**

**Dual Assessment** - another name for the Resource Family Foster/Adoptive Home Study. It is used to evaluate a prospective family who has shown interest in becoming licensed to provide foster care/and or adoption. This dual home study process incorporates the components of the PRIDE mutual assessment process.

**Expedited Placement** - a placement that is made in a shorter time frame, with a relative, pending licensure, because it is in the best interest of the child(ren). The rationale for expediting a placement is made on a case-by-case basis, according to how it will benefit the permanency and well-being of the child(ren).

**Family Development Plan (FDP)** – an individualized, on-going training plan, developed with the resource family as part of the PRIDE program, to ensure the resource family possesses the knowledge and skills (competencies) necessary to care for children.

**Fictive Kin** - those persons having a significant, family-like relationship with a child but who do not meet the definition of relative/kin.

**Idaho “Name Only” Background Check through the Idaho State Police –**

a background check that may be used when criminal history information is sought on individuals who may have contact with a child in alternative care. There is a \$10.00 fee for this. The information received is an “Idaho only” criminal history background check from the Idaho State Police. This criminal background check can be utilized in such cases as:

- Placement of a child with a relatives pending results of the *Standard IDHW criminal history background check*.
- Live-in boyfriends/girlfriends of a biological parent involved in an active case when considering returning the children to their home.
- Babysitters who periodically provide babysitting services in a licensed foster home.
- Biological parents in an active case.
- Relatives from Idaho that are visiting the resource home for an extended visit.
- Music teachers, tutors, etc. who have unsupervised contact with a child in care.

The required form and instructions to submit a request for an Idaho “name only” criminal background check can be found at the Idaho State Police website, [http://www.isp.state.id.us/identification/crime\\_history/index.html](http://www.isp.state.id.us/identification/crime_history/index.html)

**Mutual Assessment of Resource Families** - an assessment of families or individuals applying to be licensed as a resource/adoptive family. The assessment consists of no less than one consultation with the potential resource family and focuses on five competency categories. The assessment coincides with the content of the pre-service training sessions. Information gathered during the assessment process will be used by the Department in matching the needs of children with the resource family’s skills and experience. During this assessment period, the family may select out of the licensing process or the Department may decide to counsel a family out of the process.

**Pre-service training for resource families** - twenty-seven hours of PRIDE training required for licensure as a resource family, unless the family is given a variance and the PRIDE training time frame is extended.

**Pride Competency Categories** – five components of the mutual assessment, selection, preparation, support, and development processes of the PRIDE Program, as follows:

1. Protecting and nurturing children;
2. Meeting children’s developmental needs and addressing developmental delays;
3. Supporting relationships between children and their families;
4. Connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime; and
5. Working as a member of a professional team.

**Professional Team** – a team responsible for the safety, well-being, and achieving permanency for a child. This team works together in the best interest of the child. The team is composed of the child’s social worker, other agency representatives, the birth parents and the resource parents.

**Relative/Kin** - an individual having a relationship with a child by blood, marriage, or adoption. Such individuals include grandparents, siblings, and extended family members such as aunts, uncles, and cousins.

**Resource Family** - an individual or family providing care for a child in the family's home. Resource families are categorized as follows: relative/kinship, fictive-kin, or non-relative/resource family.

**Resource Family Specialist** - an individual responsible for the following: Recruitment of resource families, responding to licensing inquiries, ensuring compliance with Child Care Licensing Standards, conducting in-home consultations, completing the licensing/PRIDE assessment, participating as a PRIDE trainer, serving as a member of the placement decision making team, supporting resource/adoptive parents in their role as a member of a professional team, and engaging the resource family in completing the Resource Family Development Plan.

**Standard IDHW Criminal History Background Check** – is the Department's rule sanctioned background check. This background check is initiated at the Department's Criminal History Unit web site [www.chu.dhw.idaho.gov](http://www.chu.dhw.idaho.gov) where the Criminal History Background application (self-declaration form) is completed and fingerprint appointment scheduled. It is a fingerprint based check consisting of a self-declaration, fingerprints of the individual, information obtained from the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), the National Criminal History Background Check system (NCIC), Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI), the statewide Child Abuse Registry, Adult Protection Registry, Sexual Offender Registry, Department of Transportation, and Medicaid exclusion list IDAPA 16.05.06.010.01. This background check is required when IDHW is issuing a foster care license or for adoption purposes.

**Variance** – a variance is a means of complying with the intent and purpose of a licensing rule in a manner other than that specifically prescribed in the rule (IDAPA 16.06.02.006.46). It may be considered for relatives, fictive kin, and non-relative resource families on a case-by-case basis. However, a variance can only be approved for non-safety rules and may not adversely affect the child's safety, health or well-being. The reason for issuing a variance must be documented in the resource family licensing file and approved by the CFS Program Manager or their designee at intervals not to exceed six months. Examples of non-safety foster care standards which may be considered for a variance include but are not limited to; training requirements, bedroom and sleeping arrangements.

**Waiver** – the term waiver, as it applies to foster care licensing, is defined as the non-application of a foster care licensing standard extended only to a relative foster family which serves to promote a child's well-being while not compromising their safety. In order for an agency to consider the waiver of a foster care standard for any relative family, the following requirements must be satisfied:

- A waiver may only be considered for relatives as defined in this policy. No waiver may be approved for fictive kin or non-relative resource families.
- A waiver may only be considered on an individual case basis. Only non-safety foster care standards may be waived. The standards related to safety may not be waived.
- Waivers must be approved by the Program Manager.

### **STANDARDS:**

Children in the custody of the Department placed with someone other than a parent, or children placed through a voluntary agreement, must finally be placed in a resource family home that has been licensed by the Department or a licensing agency authorized by the State of Idaho.

### **REQUIREMENTS TO BE LICENSED AS A RESOURCE FAMILY:**

Rules Governing Standards for Child Care Licensing, IDAPA 16.06.02.400, must be evaluated and satisfied before a foster care license is issued. The following steps are required in the licensing process.

1. A prospective resource family will complete a foster care licensing application.
2. An Idaho Central Registry check will be conducted by CFS for each adult residing in the home. Additionally, CFS must check the child abuse and neglect central registry in each State the prospective foster/adoptive parents and any other adult(s) living in the home have resided in during the preceding five years. These central registry checks must be made regardless of whether Title IV-E foster care maintenance payment or adoption assistance payments are to be made on behalf of the child. If an individual has a valid or substantiated report, discuss the history of the case with a supervisor who will contact the regional Program Manager. The Program Manager will contact the Criminal History Unit if he/she has pertinent information related to safety concerns identified by the substantiated report.
3. The prospective resource family must participate in the criminal history check process, as delineated in Idaho Code Section 39-1211, Child Care Licensing Reform Act – Standards for Foster Homes and IDAPA 16.05.06, Rules Governing Mandatory Criminal History Checks, and the Adam Walsh Act. According to the above statutes and rules the following required elements must be completed:
  - All members of the household, 18 year of age or older, must start the criminal history background process by logging on to the Criminal

History Unit website: [www.chu.dhw.idaho.gov](http://www.chu.dhw.idaho.gov) . The applicants must give the agency number before they can access the criminal history unit application. Online, the applicant must complete and submit the Department's criminal history unit application ("self-declaration" form). IDAPA 16.05.06.016.

- Appointments for fingerprinting are scheduled online after the criminal history application has been completed. The criminal history background check is initiated when the applicant has submitted his/her fingerprints. The on-line application (self-declaration) alone will not begin the Criminal History Background Check.
  - The Department of Health and Welfare will verify status of the Criminal Background Clearance from the Criminal History Unit database. Verification will include a letter which can be printed from the web site or a screen print of the status page stating the applicant's background check is completed and no records were found. The process for an initial emergency placement with a relative, (Code X), differs. An explanation of Code X is found on pages 13 and 14 of this standard. A child may also be placed with a relative in an expedited placement, pending licensure if the safety criteria is met as described on pages 10 through 12 of this standard.
4. The "Home Environment Standards" evaluation must be completed early in the licensing/assessment process to determine compliance with Child Care Licensing Standards as they relate to the safety and suitability of the family's home (IDAPA 16.06.02.430-441).
  5. A licensing home study must be completed on the applicant family (IDAPA 16.06.02.405.01-03). Prospective resource parents will be assessed on their knowledge and understanding of the PRIDE competencies. A resource family license will not be issued until the applicants are assessed as meeting all competency requirements. All applicants for licensure as a resource family will participate in as many consultations as necessary to determine their knowledge, understanding and ability to demonstrate the five PRIDE competencies as determined by the licensing social worker or contractor.
  6. The applicant family must complete a one hour orientation (IDAPA 16.06.02.408.01) and PRIDE trainings. The one hour orientation includes discussion about the Department's discipline policy, foster parent agreement and the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved.

To comply with requirements and assure the safety of children placed in foster care, the social worker/clinician must document steps 1-6 in the narrative of the Foster Family Profile screen located in FOCUS. A resource family (foster care) license is

considered to be effective after steps 1 through 6 have been completed and documented. When all licensing steps have been completed, the date the license is issued, (effective date), is recorded on the Foster Family License screen located in FOCUS. For more information please see the e-manual located on the IDHW infonet.

[http://infonetdhw/manuals/FOCUS\\_emanual/FOCUS\\_emanual.htm](http://infonetdhw/manuals/FOCUS_emanual/FOCUS_emanual.htm)

All license requirements must be met regardless of whether the resource family is licensed by Children and Family Service Staff or a contractor.

Prior to placement of a child, the licensed resource family must sign the Resource Family Placement Agreement and the Department's Discipline Policy.

### **ACTION IF RESULTS OF CRIMINAL OR BACKGROUND CHECKS REVEAL SUBSTANTIATED COMPLAINTS OR CRIMINAL HISTORY:**

If during the process of checking criminal history and abuse registries, any adult member of the household is found to have a valid or substantiated complaint involving child abuse/neglect or adult abuse/neglect or any criminal conviction or withheld judgment for a misdemeanor or felony, no further action shall be taken to license the family until all background information is received by the Department or licensing agency and the Department has completed a review to determine suitability of the applicant to be licensed as a resource family.

If at any time after the issuance of a resource family license the Department receives or discovers information concerning the safety and suitability of a family with whom a child is to be placed or has been placed, the Department retains the authority to immediately revoke a license where such action is determined by the Department to be in the best interest of the child.

The Department will not approve or license any prospective foster/adoptive parent, nor does the Department claim federal funding for homes where the Department finds that based on a criminal records check a court has determined that the prospective foster or adoptive parent has been convicted of a felony, within the last five years involving:

- Physical assault;
- Battery; or,
- A drug-related offense.

Additionally, the Department will not approve or license or claim federal funding for homes where the prospective foster or adoptive parent have been convicted of a felony involving:

- Child abuse or neglect;
- Spousal abuse;
- A crime against a child(ren) (including child pornography); or a homicide, but not including other physical assault or battery.

## **TRAINING RESOURCE FAMILIES:**

- The foster care (resource family) application must be completed and submitted to the Department prior to the applicant being registered to attend PRIDE training.
- All prospective resource parents must complete PRIDE pre-service training. Resource parents are expected to attend all 27 hours of training missing no more than one session. In two-parent households, if one parent is unable to attend all pre-service training sessions due to his/her work schedule, arrangements will be made to offer PRIDE training through alternative methods such as:
  - Varying the schedule of PRIDE training,
  - Arranging for the individual to attend PRIDE training in a neighboring region if it accommodates their schedule or,
  - Arrange for independent learning using the PRIDE curriculum.

Both parents are still required to participate in the consultations and mutual assessment. Homework assigned during the training must be completed for each session.

- Individuals who have been licensed in another state and participated in that state's training program may still be expected to attend and participate in PRIDE to learn of program issues specific to Idaho. The region's program manager has the ability to review the family's previous training and, on a case-by-case basis, grant a PRIDE training variance if the family's training is shown to be substantially equivalent.
- Resource families licensed prior to the statewide implementation of the PRIDE training program will not be required to attend the full 27 hours of PRIDE pre-service training. These resource families will, however, be offered and encouraged to participate in the ten hours condensed PRIDE training designed for experienced resource families. All PRIDE training can be used to satisfy the requirement for 10 hours of annual training.
- Generally, only persons committed to caring for children placed by the IDHW will be enrolled in PRIDE pre-service training. Resource families licensed by agencies other than IDHW that do not accept placement of children by IDHW will not be required to attend PRIDE pre-service training. When IDHW is placing with tribal entities, with alternate care providers in other states, or in other unique situations not requiring licensure by IDHW, attendance or completion of PRIDE is not required. When a family is selected for the adoption of an IDHW child and the family was not previously licensed, the family will be expected to satisfactorily complete PRIDE pre-service training and become licensed as a resource family. However, the pre-adoptive placement of the child will not be delayed pending completion of the pre-service training requirement.



- If a family or individual going through the PRIDE training should select out of the program, a written assessment will not be completed and a signed letter of withdrawal should be placed in the file.
- Individuals who want to adopt a child but do not want to adopt or foster a special needs child who is in the custody of IDHW should be referred to a licensed adoption agency or a certified adoption professional (CAP) for a private adoption home study.

### **FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PLANS:**

- A family development plan (FDP) will be written in collaboration with the resource family. The initial Family Development Plan will be completed with the resource family within one month from the approval for licensure.
- Resource families licensed prior to the implementation of PRIDE should already have their initial Family Development Plan (FDP) which will be updated on the anniversary date of their licensure and annually thereafter. Training on the FDP will be provided during the PRIDE training for experienced foster parents and through the family's resource family specialist.
- Developing, implementing, and modifying the resource family's Family Development Plan (FDP) is an ongoing process. The FDP may be updated at any time as circumstances change or additional training needs are identified.
- The family development plan and progress toward meeting plan objectives will be evaluated at least annually or otherwise as necessary to support the development of core competencies.

### **ONGOING TRAINING AND SKILL BUILDING FOR RESOURCE PARENTS**

- Resource parents must complete ten (10) hours of training annually that is relevant to their Family Development Plan (FDP). IDHW will advise resource parents of training opportunities as they become available. It is the responsibility of the resource family to document any training they have participated in on their Family Development Plan and report the training to the Resource Family Specialist no later than their annual licensing review.
- Failure to complete the required 10 hours of annual training may result in revocation of the resource family license.
- Training and skill building training for resource families will be documented in FOCUS to track resource parent's training.

## EXPEDITED PLACEMENT FOR RELATIVES

There are times when circumstances warrant, and it is in the best interest of a child, to place a child with a relative more quickly than the PRIDE mutual assessment and training will allow. The rationale for expediting a placement is made on a case-by-case basis, according to how it will benefit the permanency and well-being of the child(ren). An expedited placement is not the same procedure as Code X. Code X is used only for relatives for the initial placement of a child into foster care immediately following a declaration of imminent danger or an endorsement upon the summons. An expedited relative placement is used if it is not the initial placement of the child. A placement should never be expedited if safety concerns exist with the potential resource relative family.

Below are some examples when it would be appropriate to expedite a placement using a variance:

- A relative is identified as a potential resource family after the child is initially placed in foster care. The pre-assessment of the prospective relative resource family determines the applicant has the ability to meet the five PRIDE competencies.
- To expedite the interstate placement of a child from another state into Idaho, thereby complying with the federal deadlines for completion and approval of interstate home studies. However, an Idaho name-only background check cannot be used for ICPC placements. In all cases, an ICPC placement requires the Standard IDHW Criminal History Background Check for all adults (18 years or older) living in the home. The expedited process for ICPC refers only to a variance pertaining to non-safety rules and training.

Below are some examples when it would be inappropriate to expedite a placement pending completion of the licensure process.

- The regions have a shortage of foster homes and there has been little or no contact with the prospective relative resource family to assess their ability to care for the child(ren) or work as a member of a professional team.
- Relatives want to foster a family member but more comprehensive evaluation is needed to determine the family's ability to address the child's needs according to the five PRIDE competencies. Safety issues were present historically.

### **Process For An Expedited Placement (For Use With Relatives Only) Pending Full licensure:**

1. The social worker identifies a child's relative who appears appropriate and willing to serve as a relative placement and subsequently, a licensed relative resource family.

2. The resource family specialist/social worker must document the rationale for the expedited placement in FOCUS and the Program Managers must provide his/her signature in the families file, approving the placement of the child with the relative prior to full licensure.
3. The Resource Family Specialist/ Clinician must do a separate check of the Child Abuse and Neglect registry, Adult Abuse registry, and Sexual Offenders registry on all members of the household 18 years of age or older. If the prospective relative foster/adoptive parent(s) or any individual in the household, 18 years and older, has resided in another state in the last five years, the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry must be checked in each State and for each individual before a placement can occur. Document the dates the registries were checked and the results of those checks in the narrative on the Foster Family Profile screen in FOCUS.
4. As the IDHW Standard criminal history background check may take an extended time to completion, resource parent applicants and all residents of their home that are 18 years of age or older must then have an Idaho Name Only Criminal History Background Check through the Idaho State Police. The form for the Idaho State Police Department “name only” background check is available at the DHW criminal history web site – [www.chu.dhw.idaho.gov](http://www.chu.dhw.idaho.gov) . On the home page click on the Idaho State Police tab, then click on the Idaho State Police request form. Forms are also available at the ISP web site below:

[http://www.isp.state.id.us/identification/crime\\_history/documents/CHPRequest.doc](http://www.isp.state.id.us/identification/crime_history/documents/CHPRequest.doc)

5. All requests must then be sent to the ISP Meridian office at 700 Stratford Drive, Meridian, ID. 83642. A check for ten dollars must accompany all requests. Results of the ISP “name only” criminal background check will be available within several days. Placement of children in that home must not take place until results from the Idaho State Police Criminal History Background Check have been received and no criminal history has been found.

Since this is an Idaho state, “name only” background check, the expedited placement can only be done if applicants have been residents of the state of Idaho for three or more years. Verification of three year residency can be found on income tax information and property tax information. If there is any reported history of unlawful behavior or valid/substantiated child abuse or neglect that would present a safety concern, the placement cannot be expedited pending licensure.

6. Additionally, the Standard IDHW Criminal History check must be initiated at the Department’s criminal history unit website [www.chu.dhw.idaho.gov](http://www.chu.dhw.idaho.gov) and completed by all members of the household that are 18 years of age and older.

Individuals complete the criminal history application (self-declaration form) and schedule their finger printing appointment at the website.

7. Prior to placement of a child, the Department social worker/clinician or licensing staff must visit the residence that is being considered for placement to assure adequate health and safety standards. The home environment standards checklist should be followed to assess the home. Document all information in the narrative of the Foster Family Profile screen in FOCUS.
8. A Department social worker/clinician or licensing staff must assess the potential caregiver's ability to meet the child's needs and to work with the Department as part of the professional team. The abbreviated assessment is to be documented in FOCUS and must address the 5 PRIDE competencies. The brief assessment will serve as the basis for a more thorough assessment to be completed at a later time.
9. The applicant family should complete a 1 hour orientation. An individual who is participating in the expedited placement process will not be required to complete the PRIDE mutual assessment process at that time nor the PRIDE training prior to placement and subsequent licensure. However, the family who receives a variance for training must sign an agreement, at the time of placement, to complete PRIDE training (27 hours) within 6 months following the placement of a child. Regions have discretion regarding the six months timeframe based on availability of training sessions offered and proximity of the sessions.
10. Prior to placement of a child, the licensed resource family must sign the Resource Family Placement Agreement and the Department's Discipline Policy.
11. A prospective relative resource family will complete a foster care licensing application.
12. To gather and document additional information related to the suitability of a resource family, a more comprehensive Resource Family/Adoptive home study must be completed with the applicant family prior to the license being issued.

All Rules Governing Standards for Child Care Licensing, IDAPA 16.06.02.400 must be evaluated and satisfied before a foster care license is issued. The criteria is the same for licensing relative and non-relative homes. However, the order of accomplishing the resource licensing requirements may differ.

#### **CODE X- INITIAL EMERGENCY PLACEMENT WITH RELATIVES: (NON-LICENSED)**

While the licensure of a relative family is the standard of practice, it is recognized there may be times where it is not practical to license a relative prior to the placement of a child. These situations will occur during emergency conditions when delaying a child's

placement with a relative would be further traumatizing or otherwise harmful to the child's well-being. Children should never be placed with a relative without some assurance the relative family is suitable and will not compromise the child's safety. When a relative is being considered for the emergency placement of a child, the following procedures must be completed and documented in the case record and in the narrative of the Foster Family Profile screen in FOCUS prior to placement of the child:

1. A criminal history check on all adults residing in the home must be completed. "Code X" is a process that may be utilized to make **initial placement decisions, only**, with a relative, after imminent danger has been declared or if the child is removed by an endorsement upon the summons. It is performed by local law enforcement and allows the social worker/ clinician to receive while you wait state and federal criminal history search. If the "Code X" process has been completed on all adults in the home and there is no history of a designated crime(s) or a criminal history that may pose a risk to children, placement may occur.

#### **CODE X PROCESS:**

- "Code X" is initiated by filling out the necessary information on the "Code X" forms and taking it to the nearest law enforcement agency. Submit the forms and wait for the "rap sheet".
  - If there is any reported history of a designated crime, a criminal history that poses a risk to children, or an Idaho valid/substantiated disposition of a child abuse or neglect report, the emergency placement must not occur.
  - Once a determination is made, the Code X request forms and any findings received from law enforcement must be faxed to the Criminal History Unit immediately or the following morning, if the placement is done after business hours.
  - After faxing the findings, the findings must be shredded. At no time should these findings end up in the resource family file.
2. A check of the statewide child abuse and neglect registry for all adult members of the household must be completed by the placing agency. If the prospective relative foster/adoptive parent(s) or any individual in the household, 18 year and older, has resided in another state in the last five years, the child abuse and neglect central registry must be checked in each state and for each individual prior to licensing the home. If there is a history of valid/substantiated child abuse or neglect involving any adult in the home, safety of the child(ren) should be evaluated further through the standard licensing process.
  3. Within 48 hours of using the Code X process, the Standard IDHW Criminal History background check must be initiated. A criminal history application

(self-declaration form) must be completed by all adults residing in the household and appointment for finger printing must be scheduled. To access the criminal history application each adult member of the household must go to the Criminal History Unit website: [www.chu.dhw.idaho.gov](http://www.chu.dhw.idaho.gov) . (*Once the Code X process is used, the IDHW Standard criminal history background check is required whether placement occurs or not*) The social worker/clinician must verify that all adults residing in the home have completed the criminal history application (self-declaration form) and scheduled an appointment for finger printing. To verify this information:

- Social worker/clinician should contact the designated FACS staff in their region that has access to the Criminal History Unit database;
- Social worker/clinician can require the applicants to provide them with their verification number to confirm they have begun the Standard IDHW Background check;
- Notification will be sent by e-mail to designated contact persons in each region to inform him/her of applicant status within the process.
- Social worker/clinician can call or e-mail the Criminal History Unit to verify information;

If a family does not follow through with finger printing, contact the Criminal History Unit, while simultaneously notifying the family that the child(ren) cannot continue to reside in the home unless they are compliant with the Criminal History Unit requirements.

4. Prior to placement of a child, the Department social worker/clinician or licensing staff must visit the residence that is being considered for placement to assure adequate health and safety standards. The home environment standards checklist must be followed to assess the home. Findings must be documented in the narrative of the Foster Family Profile screen in FOCUS.
5. Prior to placement, a Department social worker/clinician or licensing staff must assess the relative caregiver's ability to meet the child's needs as they relate to the 5 PRIDE competencies.

Results of steps 1-5 and rationale for placement must be documented in the child's PI in FOCUS.

When the initial placement of a child is made under the provisions of these emergency procedures, a referral is to be made within 48 hours to foster care licensing staff to initiate the process of the licensure of the relative family. Licensure of the relative family should be completed as soon as possible after placement. **Until the family is issued a foster care license, no foster care costs may be paid using Title IV-E or IV-B funds.**

If payment is needed prior to licensure, staff should consult with their supervisor in determining the most appropriate funding source, which may include a relative grant, Social Service Block Grant funds, or General Funds.

A relative licensed through the emergency placement process will not be required to complete the PRIDE mutual assessment process prior to licensure. A relative resource family who receives an emergency placement must sign an agreement, at the time of placement, to complete PRIDE training (27 hours) within 6 months following the placement of a child. Regions have discretion regarding the six months time frame based on availability of training sessions offered and proximity of the sessions.

Non-relatives are excluded from placement consideration under the provisions of these Code X emergency placement procedures.

### **SOCIAL WORKER'S RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN PLACING A CHILD WITH A RESOURCE FAMILY:**

- The placing social worker must explore all possible relative/kinship placement options and follow priority placement procedures as outlined in IDAPA 16.06.01.401 "Considerations for Placement in Alternate Care". According to Department policy, placement priority shall be given in the following order: a) immediate family; b) extended family members; c) non-family members with a significant established relationship with the child; d) other licensed resource family. It is important to involve the family in planning and selecting the placement options for a child. Additionally, the social worker will consider interstate placements in permanency planning decisions, when appropriate.
- Siblings should be placed in the same resource family home unless there are safety or health concerns associated with placing siblings in the same home. If siblings are placed in different homes, the reasons and rationale for that decision must be documented in the alternate care plan under "Preserving Connections: Sibling Contact."
- When placement of a child with a resource family in another region is being considered, CFS Program Manager of the sending region will contact the receiving region's CFS Program Manager prior to the placement. The social worker will disclose all information regarding any behaviors, concerns, and issues that may present a risk to the child or members of the resource family.
- The placing social worker will provide the resource family with all relevant information regarding the child including the following:
  - medical history,
  - immunization records,
  - allergies,
  - educational information,

- the reason for the child's placement,
- the child's placement history,
- information regarding visits or contact with family members and others,
- the estimated length of the placement,
- transportation needs,
- religious preferences,
- information regarding the child's vulnerability to mistreatment,
- any propensity of the child to pose a risk to self or others, and
- scheduled court hearings or other appointments.

### **Building a Team Approach with the Resource Family, Birth Family, and CFS Social Worker**

A family meeting with the child's birth family, the child's resource parents, and the child's social worker should be held as soon as possible after placement of the child and in preparation for completion of the alternate care plan. The goal of the meeting is to begin developing a relationship between the resource family, the birth family, and the social worker and to develop strategies on how the resource family and birth family will work together for the best interest of the child. In a few cases the meeting may be contra-indicated due to safety concerns. The decision on when to convene the meeting should be made on a case-by-case basis with documentation in FOCUS as to why the meeting was not held.

### **Resource Family Support Post Placement**

- Resource parents must be treated as members of a professional team. This relationship requires respectful interaction and frequent communication.
- The assessment of the resource family's needs must be ongoing. Services to support the resource family, such as counseling, respite, crisis intervention, and/or specialized training, should be offered, as needs indicate.
- The resource parents participation in case staffings and court hearings should be encouraged.
- The resource parents shall be provided information regarding the permanency plan for the child and may serve as mentors/trainers for the birth family working toward reunification.
- IDHW shall notify and encourage resource families to attend case reviews and court hearings. (See Standard regarding Resource Parent Notification of Reviews and Court Hearings.)

### **INTERSTATE COMPACT ON THE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN (ICPC) WITH RELATIVES OUT-OF-STATE:**



The Idaho standard of practice is to require full licensure of relative caregivers. There are situations however, where the initial request to the receiving state may be for a relative home study only, rather than for full licensure. Those situations include:

- Court ordered Regulation 7 Priority Placement (refer to Guide to the Interstate compact on the Placement of Children 2002); and
- When delaying a child's placement would be harmful to the child's well-being. Following the completion of the relative home study and the initial placement of a child, a subsequent ICPC request, including a second 100-A requesting a foster care placement, should be made of the receiving state, requesting full licensure of the relative home and placement approval as a relative foster care placement.

Either request to the receiving state will include a request for a criminal history background check, and an assessment of the relative's ability to meet the child's safety and well-being needs. Placement will not occur until receipt of the completed relative home study, including the criminal history background check and written confirmation of ICPC placement approval from the receiving state.

When a child is placed out-of-state in an unlicensed relative home, the worker placing the child must develop a financial and medical plan that will meet the needs of the child. The plan might include a TAFI relative grant in the receiving state or the relative home agreeing to be financially responsible for the placement pending licensure.

Once the out of state relative is licensed a copy of the out of state license must be submitted to the Resource Development Unit (RDU) for a re-determination of the child's IV-E eligibility.

## **ICPC PLACEMENTS WITH RELATIVES IN-STATE**

The laws of the sending state govern the placement and supervision of a child placed in Idaho. Some, but not all states, will request full licensure of the relative home. In the event a placement is made prior or without a request for licensure, the study of the relative home, including birth parents will require clearance from the standard IDHW Criminal History Background check.

If the request from the sending state is for licensure of the home, the Idaho home must meet Idaho Child Care Licensing Standards. The relative caregivers will be required to participate and complete PRIDE pre-service training.

If the child has been placed in a relative home prior to licensure, as an approved ICPC relative placement, the family will sign an agreement to participate and complete PRIDE training within six (6) months of the request for licensure.

## **PLACING CHILDREN IN HOMES LICENSED BY THE TRIBES**

When placing a child in a foster home licensed by the tribe, it is not necessary to re-license the tribal foster home. However, the tribe must verify to the Department that the tribal licensing process follows the safety precautions of criminal history background checks.

### **EXCEPTIONS TO REQUIREMENTS FOR CRIMINAL HISTORY AND BACKGROUND CHECKS.**

- Youth in foster care who reach the age of eighteen (18) years and continue to reside in the same licensed foster home.
- Youth in a children's residential care facility who reach the age of eighteen (18) and continue to live in the same licensed residential facility.
- A foster parent's child who continues to live in the home after turning eighteen (18) years of age.
- If the adult child leaves the foster home for the purpose of higher education or military service, he/she is not required to complete a criminal history and background check if he returns to the home for less than ninety (90) days.

If the foster parents' adult child leaves the foster home for longer than ninety (90) days and returns to live in the foster home as a permanent resident, he/she must complete a criminal history and background check within fifteen (15) days of his return.

If the adult child continues to reside in his parent's licensed foster home or on the same property, he must complete a criminal history and background check within fifteen (15) days of turning twenty-one years of age.

### **FOSTER CARE PAYMENTS**

Relatives licensed as a foster family must be afforded the opportunity to receive foster care payments for any children placed through the Department. A relative family may also, at their discretion, choose not to accept foster care reimbursement and apply for a "relative grant" through the TAFI program or they may provide for the child's care using their own financial resources.

**No foster care payments can be made using Title IV-E or IV-B funds with the following:**

- **Code X;**
- **Expedited placement with relatives until the foster care license has been issued;**
- **Placements with unlicensed ICPC relatives until a foster care license has been issued.**

Staff should consult with their supervisor in determining the most appropriate funding source for payments prior to licensure, which may include a relative grant, Social Services Block Grant funds, or General Funds.

**Eligibility Determination for Foster Care Payments**

When any child is placed in the home of a relative or kin caregiver, regional staff should submit a foster care eligibility packet to the Resource Development Unit (RDU) at Central Office in order for an eligibility determination to be completed. This will assure utilization of the appropriate funding source to pay the costs associated with foster care and maximize services for the foster child and family.

**Any variance to these standards shall be documented and approved by the Division Administrator, unless otherwise noted.**



